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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 9335  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 7114  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 9716  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0413  
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RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1080  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 003825

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [UNSC](#) [KN](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPANESE POLITICAL REACTIONS TO THE DPRK MISSILE  
LAUNCHES

TOKYO 00003825 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Japan's political leaders reacted angrily to the July 5 North Korean missile launches. Most are calling for Japan to respond forcefully against the launches. Some politicians, including Prime Minister Koizumi, are being more cautious when describing the way forward. In a statement on July 5, Koizumi stressed the need to leave room for dialogue and avoided characterizing the launches as a violation of the Pyongyang Declaration. The Diet members contacted by Embassy Tokyo were indignant about the missile launches. Most supported the government's response to date and, for the time being, to defer to the government regarding next steps. MOFA Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Kohno told the DCM July 6 that many senior LDP Diet members were growing impatient with the slow pace of the government's response. After the UN Security Council adopts its action, the LDP will likely become more involved in the issue, he predicted. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The reaction among Japan's political elite to the July 5 North Korean missile launches was uniformly angry. The immediate reaction from most political leaders quoted in the press and contacted by the embassy was strong, insisting that Japan should respond forcefully. Newspapers quoted senior Diet members like former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, who condemned the launch and warned that, "from now, pressure will prevail." Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe described North Korea's

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actions as "insane" and demanded a stringent response from Japan. Komeito Secretary General Tetsuzo Fuyushiba expressed anger and said it is only natural for Japan to impose strict measures. Opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader Ichiro Ozawa, in China at the time of the launches, called the DPRK's actions provocative and unacceptable. He asked China to encourage North Korea to refrain from further such acts.

13. (SBU) Other senior leaders, including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, were more cautious when describing the way forward. In a July 5 statement, Koizumi stressed the need to leave room for dialogue and avoided characterizing the launches as a violation of the Pyongyang Declaration. He called the series of launches "extremely regrettable," and did not label the launches a violation of the Pyongyang Declaration. Instead, he insisted that Japan should continue to dissuade North Korea from violating the Declaration. Former Defense Chief Shigeru Ishiba, echoed the need for caution, saying that tough measures should be taken only after fully analyzing the situation.

14. (SBU) As of July 6, the ruling coalition LDP and Komeito have publicly endorsed the Japanese government's immediate decision to prohibit the entry into Japan of North Korean vessel Mangyongbong for six months. They also set up a taskforce, headed by Secretary General Takebe, to deal with the situation. The taskforce on July 5 confirmed that the coalition would support economic sanctions by the government and a referral of the issue to the UNSC. On July 6, the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Suzuki convened an emergency meeting of the Cabinet Office's Special Team on Abduction Issues to discuss the possibility of imposing additional economic sanctions and strengthening its export controls of material that could be used in missiles. The DPRK's July 5 missile launches have also resulted in a final split of the already rocky "reconciliation" between the pro-Seoul and pro-Pyongyang organizations of Korean residents of Japan (septel).

Other Political Reactions: Yutaka Kobayashi  
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15. (C) Yutaka Kobayashi (LDP), Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, told Embassy Tokyo Political Officers on July 5 that Japan had been able

TOKYO 00003825 002.2 OF 003

to react promptly to the launches because it had a long time to prepare. Given the situation, South Korea must also strongly criticize North Korea's actions, Kobayashi commented. If the Roh Administration "has any common sense about diplomacy and international society," it needs to react harshly against the launch. China and Russia should follow suit. Kobayashi optimistically predicted that, together with its allies, Japan would bring North Korea to the UN and the UN would smoothly adopt a resolution against the missile launch.

16. (C) If the UN moved too slowly, however, Japan would likely place its own economic sanctions on North Korea, Kobayashi suggested. Japan could go beyond prohibiting the Mangyongbong entry and further restrict trade by using the foreign exchange law to stop wire transfers to North Korea. Given the decreased level of trade between Japan and North Korea, however, China's cooperation would be critical to making the sanctions effective. The launch, a clear violation of the Pyongyang Declaration, he asserted, was meant to threaten the United States and pressure it into bilateral talks with North Korea, Kobayashi opined. U.S. "financial sanctions" had been really damaging, he stated.

Lower House Security Affairs Committee Chairman Hamada  
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17. (C) Yasukazu Hamada (LDP), Lower House Security Affairs Committee Chairman, admitted that the launches had come as a surprise to him. Although Japan's reaction had been "very quick and good," it now faced the "problem" of imposing sanctions on North Korea. Japan does not want to destroy the Six-Party Talks, he noted. Moreover, some politicians are concerned that a harsh reaction by Japan could provoke an even worse action by North Korea. Hamada said the Committee had just met and felt it should respond with restraint. North Korea's missile launches were not a violation of

international law; the regime had simply failed to adequately inform the international community in advance of the launch. Japan has already imposed port restrictions on North Korean vessels. While Japan could stop wire transfers and further restrict trade with North Korea, Hamada was unsure whether it would go that far. He concluded by predicting that the public would be upset by the multiple launches, but that the launches would not be enough to shift public opinion to the political right.

Isamu Ueda, Komeito International Affairs Chairman  
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18. (C) Japan's government and people were naturally very upset by the missile launches, Komeito International Affairs Committee Chair Isamu Ueda stated. The government must take react firmly, he insisted, though he had no specific ideas on what those actions should be. North Korea had ignored Japan's repeated requests that it not launch. Ueda said he would entrust Japan's reaction to the government; if the government decides to impose economic sanctions (including halting wire transfers to Pyongyang), Ueda predicted he and Komeito would support that decision.

Tadashi Hirono, Special Committee on Abduction Issue  
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19. (C) Tadashi Hirono (DPJ), Chairman of the Upper House Special Committee on Abduction Issue, predicted that public opinion would become even harsher toward North Korea. The abductee family support groups had been lobbying for more pressure against the DPRK and, as Chair of the Abduction Committee, Hirono agreed. The missile launch was a clear violation of the Pyongyang Declaration, he argued, and would harden public attitudes toward the North.

Growing Impatience?  
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TOKYO 00003825 003.2 OF 003

10. (C) MOFA Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Masaharu Kohno told the DCM July 6 that many senior LDP Diet members were growing impatient with the slow pace of the government response. After the UN Security Council's finally decides what action it will take, the LDP will likely become more involved in the issue, he predicted. Ichita Yamamoto, chair of the LDP's simulation team on economic sanctions against North Korea, subsequently told the local media that his team will accelerate the submission of an emergency measures bill intended to impose financial sanctions on North Korea.  
SCHIEFFER